

Hello Lis, and welcome to the Martians Reunited monthly newsletter. I hope that you have had a good month and are not too badly affected by all the continuing upheaval.

In times of difficulty, it seems that people put especial focus on developing their skills and their networks of contacts, in order to continue working as effectively and productively as possible. So, this month, we focus on planned developments which we hope will support that connectivity and development.

Current Martiansreunited.com membership figures:

Active members	Current associates	Former associates	Countries represented	Gender balance
1527	427	1100	39	66% m 34% f

Careers & Business

In the spirit of facilitating learning, particularly learning at low or zero cost, we would like to highlight two particular items this month. The first is a video of Richard Baraniuk from TED.com on [Open Source Learning](#). Richard is the founder of [Connexions](#) - a website which provides free course material for courses and meetings on a huge range of subjects.

The other highlight is an article by David Drennan in the [Building a Business](#) section on the importance of the information gained from employee surveys - [What Employee Surveys can do for Managers](#). Mars units have recently won a number of different [Great Workplaces](#) awards for the quality of associate engagement as measured by surveys - here is an article which explains exactly how such information is collected and used.

New Features of the site

Since we launched at the beginning of the year, we have received many suggestions of new features and improvements. Some of them are easy to do and we have put them in place straight away; others require quite significant functional enhancements.

As a first priority we have decided to focus on two of these bigger projects: a much improved Member Search function, and the facility to create and manage sub-groups through the site.

New Member Search functionality

During May, we will be adding the following two features to the current Member Search: firstly, the facility to scroll through all members of the site and, secondly, an Advanced Search function which will enable members to search by country, category, region, function - or indeed any detail which appears on member profiles.

Managing Groups

The next priority after that will be to build the facility to create and manage sub-groups of members - such as country-based alumni groups, retiree groups, functional or special interest groups (e.g. Snackfood R&D or golf societies). This facility will be available within the next 3 months.

If you would like to set up a special interest group on the site, with the facility to manage newsletters and other communications through Martians Reunited, then please email us at Editor@martiansreunited.com and we will get in touch.

Martians Reunited on LinkedIn

That leads us neatly to the last point on connectivity this month - the fact that last night we set up a [Martians Reunited group on LinkedIn](#). We don't in any way want to challenge or compete with the many

Mars groups that already exist on LinkedIn and that do such a good job of keeping particular communities connected. What we do want to do, however, is find as many ways as possible of reaching out to Mars people, wherever they are, to invite them to join Martians Reunited. Our LinkedIn group will not generate any activity of itself; it is only there to offer people the opportunity to explore and join martiansreunited.com. If you would like to join the [Martians Reunited group](#) on LinkedIn, however, please do: it will give you the ability to connect not only with many more Martians (apparently there are thousands on there) but also with their connections - which is something that we can't yet do for you! Also, it's amazing how many people you can find on there - including [Barack Obama](#).

Advertising

The [Professional Services Advertising](#) section of the site is beginning to need some sub-groups of its own, with 27 entries in a range of disciplines and areas. Currently, it is simply in reverse order of posting so that new advertisers each have their time in the spotlight, but there are now too many to leave in one general group. In the longer term we will classify ads by region too, but meanwhile we have thought about various options: using Mars functional classifications, using a well-established job classification system such as the one that [Craigslist](#) uses, or simply grouping the ads under what seems to fit best with those that have already been posted.

Since the whole point of having a custom-designed website is so that we can design it round what our members want, could you please have a look at the [Professional Services Advertising](#) pages and tell us what you think about how you, as users of the services, would like to see these ads grouped? If you have - or have expressed - no strong views within the next couple of weeks we shall use our initiative and make a decision anyway.

News

And finally, this month we are focusing on personal rather than corporate news, with an article sent by Alan Patrick after a reunion in Fort Lauderdale of the original Export Sales and Marketing Managers from Effemex.

"March 24th 2009 was an auspicious night in Ft Lauderdale, Florida USA. The gala dinner got together of four comrades in arms from Mars UK and Effemex days in the far flung days of the 70's and 80's and beyond.



"From left to right in the photo, John Hassan, Alan Patrick, Michael Batt and Stuart Bull. Sadly missed were the late Alex Robertson and also the larger than life presence of their mutual mentor of many years, the late Gwyn Gwilym. Both of them were remembered fondly.

"The gang enjoyed a fun- and frolic-filled evening catching up and reminiscing on days spent on common ground that stretched from Scotland, the north and south of England, the States to Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

"What's interesting is that three of the four are still associated in some way with Mars: John, as an associate, being the number one Staff Officer for Sales for Mars Inc, Stuart in his leading role in the International Travel and Retail Division for Mars and Alan, who is currently undertaking a consulting project with Mars Direct out of the Hackettstown office with the new My M&Ms product line. Mike, following a stellar career with a number of airline and travel related companies has recently driven a major management buyout from his last company Carlson Travel.

"Quite a group. Quite a night. A marvellous time had by all."

Many thanks to Alan for sending this; if anyone else has celebrations to share, please email Editor@martiansreunited.com: we will be delighted to feature them.

In the next few weeks, there will be more content posted including an interview with Peter Jacobs and a range of other articles.

Have a good month,

Mike and Lis

© Martians Reunited Ltd 2009

--

[Click this link to unsubscribe.](#)

{-B91141867756817930416666402819-}